



Chief's Update
April 9, 2015
"Focusing on Similarities"

Dear Tempe Police Employees,

In prior Chief's Updates I have addressed the importance of building, strengthening, and maintaining positive relationships with all segments of our community. I have addressed and discussed the importance of applying - and abiding by, through our words and actions - the concepts of *Procedural Justice* and *Police Legitimacy*. And, I have discussed the concepts of Sir Robert Peel which reminds us that, *the police are the people, and the people are the police*.

These concepts, which I believe serve as the cornerstone of our profession, cannot be ignored or minimized. To do so, places both our community and our organization at risk; allowing wedges to be driven between one another.

This past weekend, an event was held which will forever be remembered as one of the greatest successes of the Tempe Police Department. This event, focused on placing an emphasis on shared similarities as the primary vehicle to foster relationships between the police and the community. What is the similarity you ask? Keep reading...

Approximately one year ago, Lt. Mike Pooley saw "it" before anyone else. That "it" spurned an idea.

Recognizing the limited impact of traditional law enforcement approaches to community events and messaging has had across the country - with most falling short of developing meaningful relationships, yielding marginal results at best - Lt. Pooley wanted to try something new, something innovative, and something fun; an event which not only resulted in interactions between police officers and the community, but also the families of both police officers and the community at-large. The event was to be centered on the popularity of the game of soccer.

Lt. Pooley floated the idea by Ofc. Jaimie Guzman, Ofc. John Morel and several others. Soon enough, a co-ed club soccer team of approximately 30 police officers of various skill levels was formed - complete with coaches, sponsors [Sub Factory], regulated practices, and uniforms. Once organized and team cohesion was achieved, Lt. Pooley felt it was the right time to put the idea to the test.

A few months back, while at a Tempe Police Officer hiring process, Lt. Pooley saw a group of men playing soccer nearby. Watching from afar, Lt. Pooley saw how much fun the players were having and decided to go over and talk to them. Lt. Pooley learned that the players - hailing from the African nations of Ghana, Liberia, and Nigeria - routinely met to play soccer and during the interaction, he inquired if they would they be interested in playing the newly formed Tempe Police Department - Soccer Team.

Shocked that a) a police officer would just come over and talk to them – as most had experienced negative interactions with the police in their home countries - and b) that police officers would be interested in playing a friendly game that all parties shared a true passion for, the group not only stated they would be interested, but would view it as an honor.

This past weekend, the first game was held at Kiwanis Park. Complete with referees and all facets of a regulated game, the event was truly a sight to behold...People from differing backgrounds bonding over their similar passion for a game. I was personally honored to witness such an interaction!

Though the TPD lost 0-1, everyone in attendance had their lives altered for the better...barriers were broken, perceptions were changed, and friendships were formed. There will no doubt be a re-match. And, as word has spread quickly through the various soccer teams who play pick-up games in Tempe, future TPD soccer games against different teams are being planned.

To Lt. Pooley, Ofc. Guzman, Ofc. Morel and all the other members of the TPD soccer team, “THANK YOU” for recognizing a need, being innovative, taking a chance, and focusing on what our mission as law enforcement officers should be at all times...to be full-time PEACEMAKERS.

Stay Safe,

Tom Ryff
Chief of Police

